

Helmsley Rural District Council.

The
Annual Report
of the
Medical Officer of Health
for the
Rural District
of
Helmsley.

for the
Year ending December 31st 1938.

HELMSLEY,
Allenby & Son, The Electric Press.

TO THE Helmsley Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, my Lord, and Gentlemen.

I have the honour to present my Annual Report as Medical Officer of Health for the combined District of Helmsley and Oswaldkirk, for the year ending December 31st, 1938. This contains details of the Sanitary Condition along with the Vital Statistics of your Area, as well as the administration of the Public Health.

The Public Health Officers of the Authority :

- 1.—Medical, A. C. Blair, M.B., M.D., Ch. M.,
Medical Officer of Health. (Part time).
- 2.—Deputy Medical Officer of Health, (Part time), A.T. Blair, B.A., M.B., Ch. B., (Cantab.), L.R.C.P., (London), M.R.C.S., (Eng.)
- 3.—Sanitary Officer, Mr. Wm. Hunton, (Cert R., San. I)
- 4.—District Nurse, Helmsley Area, Nurse Amy,
Certificated Midwife,

SECTION A.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area of Helmsley Union	67,705 acres
Resident Population in 1937	5,198
Dwellings Structurally separate	1,168
Dwellings Private Families	1,189
Sum represented by a penny rate	£61/8/6
Full Rateable Value	£15,754

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

Most of the inhabitants of this area are occupied in Agriculture, and the trades associated with the industry. There is no factory or local public work of any kind. During the year employment remained much as before. Unemployment applies chiefly to men beyond middle life. The erection and repair of houses has absorbed a fair amount of labour, and the Building Trade is the most flourishing Industry in the District. The Public Health remains good & has not deteriorated to any appreciable extent to a lower standard of life on account of deficient nutrition.

VITAL STATISTICS.

	Total	Male	Female
Live Births—	57		
Legitimate		25	28
Illegitimate		2	2
Birth rate per 1000 of the estimated resident population	10·1		
Still Births —	1		
Legitimate		0	1
Illegitimate		0	0
Rate per 1,000 (Live and Still Births)	17·2		
Deaths—(All causes)	77		
Death Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population	15·2		
Deaths from Puerperal Causes—Nil.			
Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age,	Total	4.	
	Male	Female	
Legitimate	2	1	
Illegitimate	0	1	
All Infants per 1,000 Live Births	70·1.		
Legitimate	50·2.		
Illegitimate	17·5		
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	12.		
Do Measles „	0		
Do Whooping Cough „	0		
Do Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	1.		

SECTION B.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

There has been no alteration in this. Infectious cases are conveyed to the Isolation Hospital at Northallerton by the Northallerton Ambulance. Other cases are usually sent to Hospital by the Ryedale Ambulance. There has been no delay in the work of sending suitable cases from the District for treatment, and the system has worked well.

NURSING IN THE HOME.

The Sisters at Canon's Garth do this work for the residents of Helmsley with the utmost promptitude and satisfaction.

TREATMENT CENTRES AND CLINICS.

The Welfare Centre meets monthly, and gives advice and treatment in the case of Children. Local Practitioners

with the assistance of the District Nurse, continue to carry out the work efficiently. It has become very popular, and the number of children attending has increased since its inception.

HOSPITALS : PUBLIC AND VOLUNTARY.

There has been no alteration in the Hospital Scheme which takes in Patients from the District, and no delay in securing residence and treatment for suitable cases. The Public is well served in this respect.

MATERNITY AND MIDWIFERY SERVICE.

In pursuance of the Midwives' Act, 1936, Helmsley, Pockley, and Eastmoors are attended by the Midwife resident in Helmsley. Rievaulx, Hawnby and Bilsdale have the services of the Nurse at Rievaulx, who is a Certificated Midwife. Harome is cared for by the Nurse from Nunnington, and Beadlam gets the services of the Kirbymoorside Nurse. The Nursing in the District is efficient, and is greatly appreciated by the inhabitants. All the work undertaken by the Nurses has been well done, and they have given cheerful and ungrudging service, sometimes in circumstances of considerable difficulty in such a widely spread area.

HEALTH VISITORS.

Helmsley has the great advantage of the resident Nurse and the visiting Sisters of Canon's Garth, who are always ready and willing to place their services at the call of the doctors and the public.

ORTHOPÆDIC TREATMENT.

The Yorkshire Orthopædic Hospital at Kirbymoorside has been of great assistance in cases of emergency and in carrying out X ray examinations.

FEVER HOSPITALS.

Infectious Cases are sent to the Isolation Hospital at Northallerton and to the Fever Hospitals at York and Scarborough.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

WATER SUPPLY.

All the villages and townships in the District have now a sufficient supply of good water.

On February 10th the supply in Wass village was inspected, and a sample taken for analysis was discovered to be polluted.

Some farm buildings about 300 yards almost directly above the collecting tank were a source of contamination. The open fold-yard during very wet weather became offensive and liquid manure overflowed and possibly gained access to the underground springs. On a report your Council decided to have the whole supply inspected by Mr. Fairbank, the York Engineer. Meantime, notice was given to users of the water to have it boiled before consumption.

On February 18th, Mr. Fairbank, along with the Sanitary Inspector, the Clerk and myself went over the ground and made a thorough inspection. A well in the garden below the farm-house which supplied it by means of a hand pump was opened out. On analysis the water was found unsatisfactory. A foul earth-closet situated about 20 yards away from the well was in a dangerous condition. In wet weather the contents overflowed and sank into the porous soil and possibly got into the well and the spring supplying the collecting tank.

On April 11th another inspection was carried out as the analysis of the water continued unfavourable. The well was put out of action by being filled up, and the earth-closet made more sanitary. A new drain was laid in the garden with a pipe leading from it to a considerable distance beyond the premises. For the supply of the farm-house a ram was put close to the tank. In the out-buildings above the house a concrete channel was connected to a pipe for carrying any effluent during heavy rain. Since then the supply has remained free from pollution.

On August 20th, the water supply of Helmsley was found to be discoloured with a heavy deposit of foreign matter. I at once reported to the Duncombe Park Estate Office—the water is privately owned—and notice was given to users to boil it before use. The reservoir in Beckdale was immediately shut off, and the water conveyed from the spring by a by-pass. On analysis it was discovered seriously polluted.

The Reservoir was thoroughly cleaned out and disinfected. It has been analysed since then, and has remained free from impurity and infection.

The cause of the contamination was most likely due to soil washed into the Reservoir during a severe thunderstorm accompanied by heavy rain.

The deficiency in the water supply of Nawton Tower and the high-lying farms and houses above Pockley continues. It is variable in flow, and householders complain of shortage, sometimes lasting for 2 or 3 days.

The joint Committee of the Helmsley and Kirbymoorside District Councils have met and conferred upon the matter on more than one occasion. It has been suggested in view of the new school to accommodate over 400 children to be erected at Beadlam that an additional supply should be provided by laying a pipe-line from the Burnfield Ghyll springs.

It is hoped that a remedy for the serious condition arising from the irregular supply above Pockley may be found and put into operation without delay.

Meantime attempts have been made to discover leakages reducing the pressure in the main, and means have been taken to conserve the supply by attention to ball-taps and valves in fields, and to pipes and taps in houses. Farmers and others have been notified to be careful in its use in future.

Constant supervision is made of all the water services of the district, which is generally well supplied with water in sufficient quantity and of good quality. The outlying areas, consisting of Farms and isolated cottages, have springs of pure water, free from contamination, which are easy of access by being piped to the respective premises, and in many instances, laid on to the houses. This latter system is being gradually extended as occasion arises. The only exception is where remote places depend upon the old method of well and pump, the cost of providing other means of supply being at present prohibitive.

One of these, a low lying farm below Wass, had a well of doubtful quality, an analysis of the water proved it to be wholesome and fit for domestic purposes.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The Helmsley and Oswaldkirk and Hawnby sewerage works and sewerage disposal have been regularly supervised and were found working satisfactorily.

The only means of sewage disposal in some of the villages is by open ditches. This is unsatisfactory, and your Council has considered the provision of adequate sewerage schemes and disposal works for the Villages of Ampleforth, Harome, and Beadlam. Competent Engineers have been consulted, and plans will be submitted to the Ministry.

In the case of Beadlam with Nawton, this is a joint matter for consideration by your Council and Kirbymoorside R.D.C. Conferences have been held & plans discussed. These proposals have met with a ready response on your part for the improvement of the sanitation and amenities of the district. All the plans are well advanced and estimates made of the extent and cost of such. There is every probability that the work will be carried out in the near future.

The scheme for the new Helmsley and Ampleforth works has been submitted to the Ministry and is awaiting inquiry.

RIVERS and STREAMS.

These are kept clear of pollution. The camps and huts near the streams have been visited and notice given to keep them free of sewage and obstructing rubbish. There has been no cause of complaint during the year.

CLOSET ACCOMODATION.

Your Council have obtained conversion of a number of earth closets to the system of water carriage. All the new houses are provided with bath rooms and water closets. This implies that sewage must be removed from dwellings by piping to a suitable distance to avoid possible nuisance. The number of septic tanks has greatly increased, this is at best an expedient and cannot be favourably compared with a proper disposal by means of well-planned sewerage works. Most of our large villages will be adequately provided with these possibly by the end of next year.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Refuse in practically all our villages is collected at frequent intervals and conveyed to suitable tips. The smaller villages of Scawton, Cold Kirby, Old Byland and Carlton, make their own arrangements for removal of rubbish, and there is no cause for complaints. Visitors to our beauty spots are warned by notices to abstain from leaving refuse

of any kind behind them, and receptacles have been placed in prominent places for the deposit of all such.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

During the past year 614 miscellaneous inspections were made on various sanitary matters and many improvements carried out. Many other visits were made by the Sanitary inspector and Deputy Medical Officer and myself in connection with houses and defective roads and minor alterations to premises and such like. The Public Lavatory in Helmsley has been much appreciated by visitors and market people and has filled a much needed want.

VISITS.

Bake-houses	47	Refuse Disposal	36
Fried Fish Shops	43	Ice Cream Shops	
Workshops	8	and Stalls	14

DISINFECTIONS.

14 houses and premises were disinfected after Scarlet Fever cases.

3 Houses after fatal cases of Cancer.

3 Schools were disinfected after closure on account of infectious illness of children attending them.

SHOPS AND OFFICES.

These were regularly visited and inspected, and sanitation and other conditions found quite satisfactory. Sanitary conveniences were provided in all cases.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

No action was required.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.

There are no public baths in the area. Bathing during summer takes place in the streams.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.

Fortunately these pests are unknown in our houses. The standard of cleanliness among our people is of a high order. Even in our oldest houses, which are becoming fewer each year, parasites are practically unknown.

SCHOOLS.

All the schools in the district have been regularly inspected. The sanitary arrangements were found to be in good order, and the water supply satisfactory.

SCHOOL CLOSURE.

On January 4th, Gilling school was closed until February 17th, on account of an Epidemic of Measles, only 14 children were present out of a possible attendance of 35. When the school re-opened 6 children were present. It was again closed until March 7th.

On January 11th, the Helmsley Methodist school was closed on account of Measles, until March 21st. It had been opened on March 3rd when less than 45 per cent of the children attended.

On March 3rd, Helmsley Girls' and Infants' School was closed until March 21st, for measles. Less than 50 per cent of the children were attending the school.

On the same day Helmsley Boys' School was closed until March 21st, for measles. The percentage was less than 50.

On March 5th I visited Rievaulx School on a report that Measles and Chicken-pox had broken out in the Village. As more than 60 per cent of the children were present I did not close the school pending further developments. It was ultimately found unnecessary to close it.

On March 22nd, Ampleforth R.C. School was closed on account of measles having broken out. Less than 40 per cent of the children were attending the school when I visited it.

On December 20th, Whooping Cough broke out in Bilsdale and affected many of the children attending Fangdale Beck School. At the time of my visit only 4 children were at school on this account; and the school was closed until January 9th, 1939.

SECTION D.

HOUSING.

Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year :

1.—(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts.)

(b). Number of inspections made for the purpose	66
2.—(a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) inspected and remedied under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1924 and 1932.	48
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	66
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	nil
(4) Number of Houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceeding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	14
2— <i>Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notices :</i>	
Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers.	8
3— <i>Action under Statutory powers during the year :</i>	
(a) Proceedings under sections 9, 10, and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936.	
(1). Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs.	3
(2). Number of dwelling-houses rendered unfit after service of formal notices.	3
(a) By owners	3
(b) By local authority in default of owners	Nil
(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts	Nil
(c) Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which demolition orders were made	Nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	1
(d) Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936.	
(1) Number of separate tenements or under-rooms in respect of which closing orders were made.	11

- (2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in which closing orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit. Nil

4. *Housing Act, 1936—Part IV. Overcrowding.*

- (a) III. Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year. 2
- (II) Number of families dwelling therein. 2
- (III) Number of persons dwelling therein 16
- (b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year. Nil
- (d) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses again became overcrowded after the local authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding. Nil
- (e) Any other particulars with respect to overcrowding conditions.

SECTION E.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

MILK SUPPLY.

Under the Milk and Dairies Order 246 Inspections of Cowsheds and Dairies were made during the year, and leaflets were distributed to Milk producers with a view to improving the standard of cleanliness in the production and sale of milk. All the Schools in the District are supplied with milk for consumption by the children during attendance. Malted Milk is supplied where the children prefer it.

More Milk Sellers now deliver milk in sealed bottles. Consumers are advised to boil milk before using it. Samples of milk exposed for sale were taken from time to time and tested for dirt. Generally speaking few samples were found unfit for consumption. A great improvement has taken place in the sanitary conditions of Dairies and Cowsheds. Milk collected from the farms by wholesale firms is delivered in sterilised containers. Advice has been given to milk producers regarding the importance of keeping cows scrupulously clean and in a state of good health. The personal habits of milkers have undergone almost a revolution.

Pasteurisation of Milk is practically unknown in the District, and cows are rarely tested for Tuberculosis. The dangers of raw milk when in an unclean condition have been explained. When any infectious illness is reported on a farm, or in the home of any person concerned with the handling of milk or in its distribution, a visit is made by the Sanitary Officer or by myself, and inquiry made. In this respect I have on at least one occasion had the advice and assistance of the County Medical Officer of Health. And I believe no infection has yet been traced to to milk sold to the public in this District. A close and constant supervision of milk is the aim of the Sanitary Authority. The old haphazard method of milk-sellers are no longer tolerated.

MEAT & OTHER FOODS.

The Meat exposed for sale is invariably of excellent quality. Weekly supervision is made of shops and stalls where meat and food is sold to the public. No action was required to be taken during the year. Slaughter-houses are regularly inspected and vehicles for distributing food are examined as a regular routine.

CARCASES INSPECTED & CONDEMNED.

	Cattle exclud- ing Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep & Lambs	Pigs
Number killed	443	—	20	468	50
Number Inspected	138	—	—	194	38
All diseases except Tuberculosis, Whole Carcasses condemned	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	—	—	—	—	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	—	—	—	—	—
Tuberculosis only, whole carcasses condemned	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ condemned	—	—	—	—	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	—	—	—	—	—

ADULTERATION.

(c) No action was required during 1938.

CHEMICAL & BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF FOOD.

Chemical and Bacteriological Examination of Water was made by the North Riding Laboratory at Scarborough.

No action was necessary with regard to Food.

(e)

NUTRITION.

Public Lectures and Demonstrations were given to the number of 10 during the year—5 of these in the surrounding villages. Lectures in connection with the A.R.P. work during the winter months, including First Aid and Gas-poisoning, took up time that would have been given to matters more directly concerned with the Public Health.

(f)

SHELL FISH.

Information on this does not affect your District.

SECTION F.

**Prevalence of, and Control over Infectious
and Other Diseases.**

At the beginning of the year Measles broke out in Helmsley, Gilling & Ampleforth which necessitated closing the Schools for varying periods. Chicken-pox affected the children in Rievaulx, but the School was not closed. At the end of the year Whooping-cough was the cause of closing the Fangdale Beck School. The cases were fortunately of a mild character, and there were no serious complications.

A case of Scarlet Fever was sent to the Isolation Hospital at Northallerton from East Moors in September, and after a residence of several weeks returned home. Within a day or two the mother became infected and had to be sent to the Hospital. A child from Harome was sent to the Hospital suffering from Scarlet-fever, and within two days of its return home another child became affected with the disease. The parents refused to permit it to be sent to the Hospital, and it was nursed at home.

I reported the matter to your Council, as I was of the opinion that both these children were carriers of the infection when they returned from Hospital.

A letter to the County Medical Officer of Health and the Hospital Authorities was sent by the Clerk stating the facts-

In reply the Hospital Authorities disclaimed liability, as the throats of all the patients had been thoroughly disinfected before the children were allowed to return home, and swabs then taken were found sterile.

At the Council's next Meeting the Clerk was instructed to write to the Hospital that it was anxious that every precaution should be taken in view of the danger of spreading the infection and also the serious expense involved in removing cases to the Isolation Hospital.

Every care had been taken to disinfect the houses and clothing of persons removed—both before & after isolation

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR 1938 (Other than Tuberculosis)

Disease		Total Cases Notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Small-pox	...	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	...	23	17	0
Diphtheria	...	0	0	0
Enteric Fever inc, Paratyphoid		0	0	0
Puerperal Fever	...	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyreria	...	1	1	0
Pneumonia	...	8	0	0
Other Diseases generally notifiable	...	0	0	0
Other Diseases notifiable locally	...	0	0	0

AGE PERIODS

Disease	Under 1 year	2-3	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-45	Over 65
Scarlet Fever	0	1	2	5	7	4	4	0
Pneumonia	1	1	2	2	0	0	1	1
Diphtheria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyreria	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

No cases requiring treatment for the prevention of blindness were seen during the year. The usual Catarrhal Conjunctivitis occurred in the Spring and Summer. None needed Hospital treatment.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Particulars of New Cases of Tuberculosis and Deaths from the Disease during 1938.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Rsp'try		Respiratory		Non-Rsp'try	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	P
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
45	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
65 & upwards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0

CAUSES OF DEATH IN HELMSLEY R.D. 1938.

	Male	Female
Digestive Diseases	0	1
Premature Birth	1	2
Senility	3	1
Suicide	0	1
Other Violence	3	0
Other Defined Diseases	6	3
Diabetes	2	3
Cerebral Hæmorrhage	0	2
Heart Disease	8	6
Other Circulatory Diseases	3	0
Bronchitis	1	0
Pneumonia	0	2
Other Respiratory Diseases	0	1
Diarrhœa (under 2 years)	1	0
Appendicitis	2	0
Measles	0	0
Scarlet Fever	0	0
Whooping Cough	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	1	3
Cancer	4	8
Pemphigus	1	0

Causes of Death continued.	M	F
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	1	1
Pernicious Anaemia	1	0
Nephritis	1	0
Uraemia	2	0
Infantile Gastro-enteritis	1	0
Influenza	1	0
TOTAL	43	34

WEATHER REPORT,

Again I am able to give a short summary of the weather conditions in Helmsley during the year, by the courtesy of Mr. E. Williams, Headmaster of the C. of E. Boys's School, who has kindly supplied the Weather Statistics for each month.

RAINFALL

The total Rainfall in 1938 was 34.00 inches. For 1937 this amounted to 33.37 inches, and in 1936 to 34.36 inches.

The monthly record varied from a minimum rainfall of .25 inch in April, to a maximum of 5.39 inches in December. The early months of the year were exceptionally dry. February had a rainfall of only 1.40, March .32, and April .25 measured in inches. These were our driest months. At the other end of the year we had heavy rains—October showing 4.92, November 3.86, and December 5.39 inches respectively. These were our wettest months.

Very little snow fell during the year. In January we had a fall of snow on 3 days, February 2 days, March 1 day April 1 day, November 2 days, and December 3 days. The first snowfall of the year was on January 9th. There was very little fog in the early months of the year. In November and December there were a few days of fog ; but for the most part the weather was cold and stormy.

TEMPERATURE. Cold.

The temperature reached freezing point and under sometime during the 24 hours of the day on seven months of the year. January had 17, February 15, March 7, April 13, May 6, October 3, November 12, and December no less than 20 days with the thermometer falling below freezing point.

The coldest day of the year was December 19th with 14 degrees of frost.

WARM

As usual, July and August were our warmest months. Temperature remained below 80 degrees throughout the year. This contrasts with a reading of 80 degrees or over on 8 days in 1937. June 13th to the 18th showed warm days with a temperature averaging 74 degrees. From July 8th to the 20th the average was 75 degrees. The first 10 days of August were warm. June 15th and 18th and Aug. 1st were our warmest days—temperature averaging 77 degrees. At no time the temperature during the summer became hot. It was a mild rather than a warm summer. During July and August the readings were of an unusual uniformity.

WINDS

In 1938 the prevailing winds came from a westerly direction. During the first three months of the year the wind was mostly due North and West. West wind was seen on 91 days, and South-West on 83 days during the year. It came direct from the North on 67 days and from the South on 21 days. As in former years westerly winds were most prevalent. It came from the East on 26 days, & from a Southerly direction on 21 days. We had East and North-East wind on the other days of the year. December 19th, our coldest day, had wind mostly from the North-East.

The weather during 1938 was on the whole of a mild character. February, March & April were exceptionally dry months, and temperature was considerably above the average. The atmospherical conditions throughout the year were free from extremes. The Winter was warmer than usual, and the equable temperature during July and August was conducive to good health. There were fewer chest ailments than usual, and the Public Health remained at a high level.

It gives me much pleasure to record my thanks for the unfailing courtesy of my Professional Colleagues in carrying out my duties, and to your Council and its Officers for their assistance and support.

I have the honour to be,

Your Obedient Servant,

ALEXANDER C. BLAIR.

